

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for dispatching vehicles for pickup and delivery, using a computerized and at least partially automated system, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving telephone messages comprising electronic indicia in a calling signal of the location of pickup sites;

receiving destination information;

contacting and identifying vehicles available for effecting pickups at various ones of the pickup sites; and

issuing instructions to vehicles to proceed to the pickup sites.

2. The dispatching system of claim 1, wherein the vehicles being dispatched are selected from a group consisting of: taxis, limousines, ambulances, school buses, and trucks.

3. The method of claim 1, comprising enabling customers at the pickup sites to interact with a central, at least partially automated, dispatching system through interactive voice communication.

4. The method of claim 1, including enabling customers to communicate with a central dispatching system which handles calls to dispatched vehicles

dispersed over many different cities and comprising many different operators of vehicle fleets.

5. The method of claim 1, further including providing from the vehicles that are being dispatched, global positioning information and tracking the location of vehicles both prior to and en route to pickups.

6. The method of claim 5, further including repeated calculations of distance of the vehicle to the location of the pickup and communicating that information to the pickup location.

7. The method of the claim 6, further including calculating time of arrival at pickup sites.

8. The method of claim 7, further including calculating time of arrival based on stored traffic patterns and time of day criteria.

9. The method of claim 1, further including providing monthly statements and account information to repeat customers electronically.

10. The method of claim 1, further including using ANI and/or DNIS for determining customer locations.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising a lookup table for customers that is indexed based on customer's telephone numbers.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising customers communicating with a central dispatching system via voice communication with voice recognition and voice synthesis.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising communication between customers and a central dispatching system via customer held personal digital assistants.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising a central dispatching system communicating to customers pickup information and update information via electronic messages to customers' computers.

15. The method of claim 1, further including providing to customers ancillary data about destination sites.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the ancillary data comprises entertainment information, accommodation information and/or transportation information.

17. The method of claim 1, further comprising enabling customers to communicate via computers that have

drop down menus providing a choice of options to potential customers, including type of car, trip rate calculations and cost information.

18. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing to repeat customers a menu of a plurality of destination addresses for a customer to choose from.

19. The method of claim 1, including communicating with a central dispatching system that receives the telephone messages via the Internet.

20. The method of claim 1, including playing to customers advertising messages.